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ABSTRACT

An interdisciplinary English-Social Studies-art-music seminar taught by several staff members is proposed in an article in the Maine English Bulletin. Required courses such as English and Social Studies represent the core of the program which is enriched by the introduction of art and music. The curriculum is constructed around broad questions such as "What are the universal themes?". Course work include individual reading, independent study projects, and field trips in addition to seminar discussions. Although the course is designed for heterogeneously-grouped students, a bibliography of readings, films, and records is suggested for slow learners. (RS)

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An Interdisciplinary Approach: An English-Social Studies-Art-Music Seminar

by FRANCES M. RUSSELL
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> *"Man himself is the crowning wonder of creation; the study of his nature is the noblest study the world affords."*
>
> Gladstone

Man's consciousness has been concerned with a search for knowledge of himself and of the universe in which he lives. In this constant search man develops an attitude toward life which we can view in a broad sense when we study his philosophy as revealed in his attitude toward social developments and in his arts. Art at the heart of aesthetic activity is our human endeavor to express how we feel and to do it honestly.

Religious and aesthetic values revealing a growth in man's vision can be observed in a study of the world's great literature. Coming into awareness of beauty for the first time awakens in us a feeling of spontaneity which is necessary in creating values and in living. It is then that human endeavor in the arts and in social adjustment really begins and that "self" is made spontaneous and significant. Self-knowledge is at the bottom of all art.

A modified seminar organized as a laboratory type of course in which a study of literature, composition, and social problems is enriched by a study of parallel or contrasting themes and forms in art and music opens up a world in which students can "discover" themselves through the arts. As they develop confidence in their abilities to interpret and evaluate, they grow in maturity and poise. An interdisciplinary English-social studies-art-music seminar taught, ideally, by several staff members, perhaps one in English, one in social studies, one in art, and one in music is more stimulating than a course offered by one or two is likely to be, for different points of view based on different talents will be represented. In the structure suggested here, a required course, such as English, or

courses, such as English and social studies, will represent the core so that traditional demands can be eliminated from the full schedules many students already carry and thus provide a block of free time. This core will provide for enrichment by the introduction of art and music. A seminar structure and multi-level reading materials will enable the staff to meet the needs of the individual student and to encourage him to work up to capacity.

Seminars can be organized for heterogeneous groups of students by providing differentiated activities and modifying the distribution of time devoted to them. Extremes of ability levels should not be included in any one seminar, however, for this places too heavy a demand on the staff members who will already be spending more time in planning and organization than is required for a traditional course.

Seminar discussions may be introduced by broad concepts which become specific as individual works are studied. The students should be reminded that great art is a reflection of aspects of the culture in which it is created and that a real appreciation of this art is based on both an understanding of the culture and the way in which artists, as they create for themselves, react to forces within it. Since the aim is to have the students develop not only a feeling for an artistic creation and a social issue but also an understanding of them, the curriculum can be constructed around such broad questions as the following:

1. What are art and beauty?
2. To what extent do literature, social solutions, art and music reflect the spirit of the ages?
3. What are the various approaches to (treatments of) tragedy and comedy in the arts?
4. What are the enduring qualities that are inherent in classics and account for their universal appeal?
5. What are the universal themes?
   a. Do the themes seem characteristic of an age, or do they run through all ages?
   b. How are they treated in each age?
6. When has prose been the predominant mode of literary expression?
7. When has poetry been the predominant mode of literary expression?

8. How do trends in prose and in poetry relate themselves to the social solutions and art and music of the day, and in what way?
9. What pattern can be noted during the year of recurring trends?
10. What conclusions can be related to the world of the twentieth century?

Such questions distributed during orientation week will serve as a set of objectives during the year. A student should be encouraged to choose projects which grow out of the world in which he operates.

These seminars should be organized so that the discussions structured around the kind of objectives listed above will stimulate independent thinking:

1. Class sessions could be round-table discussions of an informal nature. the purpose being to foster an interest in sharing intellectual ideas.
2. Joint meetings of all staff members with students should be held to provide an opportunity for enrichment activities and an exchange of ideas; activities should be varied: guest speakers from the local arts and business, a tour of architectural sites which reveal classical influences, attendance at rehearsals of plays, a visit to a legislative hearing, and visits to local business firms and craft projects, for example.
3. Attendance at cultural programs which include a variety of experiences should be encouraged: high school, community and college plays, concerts, art exhibits. (A spring trip to a cultural center will provide students with an opportunity to put to practical use the background they have been building.)

A Possible Organization

Areas: English, social stduies, art, music

Size of group: Approximately 18

I. Unit Approach

A. Introduction of a unit: The four teachers may be involved in an introduction relating the four areas. (This introduction should serve only as a point of departure and should provide opportunity for student involvement in the choice of the direction to be followed in later discussions.)
Careful planning to provide for an intersting presentation and to arrange for audio-visual aids is necessary.

B. Reading time for English and social studies concurrent with laboratory work in art and music: Experimenting with mediums in art and listening to records in music will provide the students and the English and social studies teachers with time for outside reading.

C. Seminar discussions: Students may be divided into groups of 9 each in English and social studies which can be interchanged, thus necessitating more individual involvement by students; or the groups may be combined to avoid duplication of effort in the presentation of materials.

D. Independent study project: A project may be chosen by the student during the introduction and reading period. The content for the project could relate to any or all of the four areas of interest, but an important English emphasis should be on composition. The scope of the project should be narrow enough to enable the student to do quality, in-depth work.

E. Field trips: Weekly or semi-monthly trips, depending upon the events available at a given time, will be stimulating and will contribute to the enjoyment of the program.

F. Spring field trip: A five-day visit to a cultural center, such as New York, Washington, or Boston, with students given a choice of experiences will generate individual judgments of a critical nature.

II. Types of Local Field Trips

A symphony concert
College concerts
Plays and speakers provided by the colleges
Pottery shops
Artists' studios
Museums
State Museum in Augusta
Archeological dig in Pemaquid
State Legislature
An industrial firm
A city planner's office

III. Credit: 3 units of credit offered for 3 periods each day have been approved by the State Department of Education.

Suggested Division of Class Time

4 periods of English – 1 unit
4 periods of social studies – 1 unit
2 periods of art – ½ unit
2 periods of music – ½ unit

12

3 periods – Interrelating of disciplines

This time should be used in a flexible way, however, so that a problem can be completed without regard for bells.

IV. Objectives: Within this framework, students can analyze specific concepts studied in the arts and develop skills in communicating their ideas. The following are examples of what could constitute specific requirements in the development of a course of study:

A. Works in the arts and social studies representative of significant trends and patterns can be assigned for study, some intended for detailed class analysis, others to provide the students with an opportunity to develop skills in assimilating ideas gained through independent study and research.

B. The writing of many critical and expository essays in which unity, clarity, and style are stressed should be required.

C. Creative writing for a school literary magazine may be encouraged.

D. A comprehensive senior research paper stressing research techniques may be required, the subject chosen by the student from a list of materials related to the study.

E. Listening skills, discussion techniques, and an understanding of art techniques can be stressed.

A Sample Introductory Class Period for a College Bound Group

Unit: Stream of consciousness in literature, impressionism in art and music and the English-Irish conflict, using the novel *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as a point of departure.

I. Audio-visual materials

A. Statements on blackboard

"The unexamined life is not worth living."

Socrates

"Life is a comedy to the man who thinks; a tragedy
to the one who feels." Horace Walpole
"Man is the measure of all things."
Protagoras

"He is of the earth, but his thoughts are with the stars."
Carlyle

B. Prints on bulletin board
Breugel's *The Fall of Icarus* (for later use of the myth in discussing the novel)
Monet's *Le Basin d'Argentevil* (in relating the stream of consciousness technique in the novel to impressionism in art)

C Record playing on record player
Debussey: *La Mer* (in relating the stream of consciousness technique in the novel and impressionism in art to impressionism in music)

D. Single shot from a film or filmstrip (for introducing an Irish social problem)

II. Procedure to follow for first class period in the unit (all four teachers present and observing but making no contribution)

A. No introduction by teachers at this point
B. Informal period for students to wonder, listen, discuss, and question. The students should be free to move around and talk among themselves. (This will contribute toward making them feel comfortable and toward breaking down their inhibitions.)
C. Assignments for Reading Period:

English—*The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
Social Studies—Research on the struggle for home rule in Ireland with an emphasis on the parts played by Parnell and Davitt
Background enrichment—Poems about Icarus by W. H. Auden and William Carlos Williams and the Daedalus myth (Music and art assignments will develop later out of laboratory experiences)

III. Objectives for this class period:

A. To make students feel comfortable.
B. To stimulate independent thinking.
C. To create an atmosphere for student-oriented discussions as the unit progresses.

Some Ideas That Could Be Introduced in Various Units in Literature Which Will Stimulate Students in the Development of Other Ideas and One of the Many Literary Works That Could Be Used in Introducing Each.

1. Man's view of himself as possessing all of the qualities of the gods but the quality of immortality—*Iliad*
2. A quest for knowledge of his world which makes man forget his responsibility to his fellow man—*Odyssey*
3. The blindness of man's search for truth—*Oedipus the King*
4. Man's awareness of the order and harmony in the universe as he becomes one with universal truth—*Oedipus at Colonus*
5. A conflict between divine and secular law, destroying the natural harmony in the universe—*Antigone*
6. The evolving of justice through *hubris* into a higher justice tempered by mercy—*The Oresteia*
7. The destructive elements of passions—*Medea*
8. The courage of an act of humanity which is in defiance of a tyrannical ruler—*Prometheus Bound*
9. An insistence on virtue which leads to an almost egotistical defiance which is ameliorated as God reveals his omnipotence. (Job sees the "ladder" of the universe, a ladder similar to Plato's "ladder" in *The Symposium.*)—*The Book of Job*
10. Man's need to know all aspects of evil before he can truly repent and reach toward oneness with God—*The Inferno*
11. Destruction as man, disregarding his power of poetic imagination which should save him, is controlled by ambition—*Macbeth*
12. Man's inability to adjust to the "unweeded garden" of life—*Hamlet*
13. Cruel passion as man, blind to the real beauty of his wife's love, feels this love cannot be part of his "heaven"—*Othello*
14. Irrationality in vanity—*King Lear*
15. Man's hunger for the knowledge that will make him the equal of the gods, a hunger that can be cured only by a loss of oneself in a creative, meaningful act toward humanity—*Faust*

16. The irrationality in life and man's need to have meaning versus the superman type of rationality, a rationality doomed to failure—*Crime and Punishment*

17. The fall of a once great "house" because man, acting out of harmony with the basic forces of nature, contributes to its fragmentation—*The Sound and the Fury*

18. Man's search for identity and his struggle to be free to create—*The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

19. A fragmented society, superimposed on the objective correlative of the Fisher King myth, which needs a new awakening—*The Waste Land*

There could be many such reading lists to introduce the same or similar themes for stimulating discussion. A bibliography of readings, films, and records suggested for slow learners is included at the conclusion of this article. A staff should select its reading list based on its own strengths, its students' abilities, and the materials it has available.

Important among the advantages of the English-social studies-art-music seminar suggested in this paper are student involvement in developing the program and the variety of experiences: seminar discussions, laboratory work, and independent study. A high school humanities program enriches a college preparatory student's background, making him aware of the many opportunities that lie ahead for him in college. A humanities program is perhaps even more important for the terminal student whose only exposure to this kind of enrichment may be in the high school.

HUMANITIES MATERIALS SUGGESTED FOR SLOW LEARNERS

The topics listed in the materials below may be approached through more than one media; for example, the theme of Horror may be explored not only through readings but also through films.

READINGS

Perception

1. "The Shell," a poem by James Stephens in the paperback *Poems for Pleasure* (Hill and Wang, N. Y. $1.50)
2. "The 38," a poem by Ted Joans in Langston Hughes' *New Negro Poets: U.S.A.* (Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington, Ind. $4.95)

3. "The Miracle Worker," included in the 8th grade *Adv. in Lit.* anthology (There is a program on the play in *Steps to Better Reading*, the programmed instruction test accompanying the anthology.)
4. "Three Days to See," Helen Keller's essay in *Moments of Decision*, a scholastic literature unit anthology.
5. "Road Test," in *Adventures Ahead*, Harcourt Brace & World
6. "Mysterious Messages" in *Adventures Ahead*, Harcourt Brace & World
7. "Slime" in Hitchcock's *More Stories My Mother Never Told Me*, Dell 50c
8. "Taste" in Roald Dahl's *Someone Like You* (Dell's Great Mystery Library, 750 Third Ave., N. Y.)
9. "A Cask of Amantillado," a short story by Edgar Allen Poe in 11th Grade *Adv., In Amer. Lit.* and in March 18, 1965 *Scope*
10. *The Man Who Rode the Thunder* by William Rankin, Lt. Col., U.S.M.C. (Pyramid Books, 444 Madison Ave., N. Y. 50c)
11. *Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury* (Bantam Pathfinder edition, 271 Madison Ave., N. Y. 16, N. Y. 50c)

Sensory Details

12. "Owl Creek Bridge" by Ambrose Bearce

Imagination: The Importance of Perceiving Works of Art Creativity

13. *A Century of Great Short Science Fiction Novels* edited by Damon Knight (Dell Publishing, N. Y., 1964)
14. "The Invisible Man" by H. G. Wells in *A Century of Great Short Science Fiction Novels*
15. *Great Tales of Action and Adventures*

Horror Stories

16. "The Graveyard Rats" in *The Graveyard Reader*, edited by Groff Conklin (Ballantine Books, Inc., 101 5th Ave., N.Y.C.)
17. "The Monkey's Paw" in *Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural*, edited by Herbert A. Wise and Phyllis Fraser (Modern Library, 457 Madison Ave., N.Y.C.)
18. "The Wax Work" in Alfred Hitchcock's *Ghostly Gallery* (Random House, 457 Madison Ave., N.Y.C.)
19. *Stories My Mother Never Told Me*, Alfred Hitchcock (Dell Publishing Co., 750 3rd Ave., N.Y.C.)
20. *More Stories My Mother Never Told Me*, Alfred Hitchcock (Dell)
21. *Tar Heel Ghosts* (Univ. of N. C. Press, Chapel Hill, N. C., $3.00)

22. *Great Tales of Action and Adventure,* edited by George Bennet (Dell–3202–45c)

Music

23. *A New Dictionary of Music by Arthur Jacobs* (Penguin Books, Inc., 3300 Clipper Rd., Baltimore, Md.)

Dance

24. *7 Arts,* edited by Fernando Puma (Double Day & Co., Garden City, N. Y.)
25. *Pictorial Library:* pp. 178-184 for ballet, 184-188 for Modern, 188-191 for Jazz

Tragic Prejudices

26. *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story,* one text containing both (Dell Publishing)
27. *Hooked on Books* (includes a study guide to "West Side Story") (Berkley Medallion Books, 15 E. 26th St., N.Y.C.)
28. *Black Like Me* by Richard Griffin
29. *Native Son* by Richard Wright
30. *Mr. Kennedy and the Negroes* by Harry Golden
31. *Why Can't We Wait* by Martin Luther King
32. *The Third Generation* by Chester Himes
33. *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
34. *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin
35. *Two Blocks Apart* by Mayerson
36. *All Around America* (includes a retelling of "Romeo and Juliet") (The 8th grade Scott, Foresman lit. text)
37. *Scope* (Scholastic Magazines, 902 Sylnan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, N. J.)
38. *West Side Story,* a novelization by Irving Shulman (Pocket Books, 1 West 39th St., N.Y.C.)
39. Bullfinch's *Mythology*
40. Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*

Themes for Adolescents

41. *Animals,* Scholastic Literature Unit Anthology
42. "The Ballad of the White Stallion," a poem by an 8th grade girl in *Animals* inspired by the film "White Mane" (Contemporary Films)

Struggle for Survival

43. "The Interlopers" by Saki in *Great Tales of Action and Adventure* (Dell Publishing Co.)

44. *The Top of the World* by Hans Ruesch (Pocket Books, Inc. 630 5th Ave., N.Y.C.)
45. *Book of the Eskimos* by Peter Frenchen (Fawcett Publishers, Inc., Greenwich, Conn.)
46. "The Cremation of Sam McGee" in *Poems for Pleasure* by Hill and Wang (The Colonial Press, Clinton, Mass.)
47. "To Build a Fire" in the 11th grade *Adventures in Lit.* series.

The Awakening of Conscience

48. *Chaplain on the Waterfront*, the story of Father Saunders by Van MacNair, Jr. (The Seabury Press, Inc., N.Y.C.)

A Boy's Apprenticeship to Nature

49. "The Alligator Hunt," a short story from *High Adventure* (Scholastic Literature Anthology)
50. "Gator Boy," a short story from *Courage* (Scholastic Lit.)
51. "You've Got to Learn," a short story from Animals (Scholastic Literature)

Cruelty on an Incomprehensibly Massive Scale

52. "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson (A short story in many anthologies)
53. *Here to Stay, Bantam Pathfinder,* Edition SP 124, 271 Madison Ave., N. Y., N. Y.
54. *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank (Pocket Books, Inc., 630 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C.)
55. *The Family of Man,* Doubleday Book Co.

Overcoming Reluctance to Write

56. *Just So Stories* by Kipling (Schocken Books, 67 Park Ave., N.Y.C.)
57. *The Jack Tales* by Richard Chase
58. *Hercules and Other Greek Myths* (Scholastic Book Services)

FILMS

Sensory Details

"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," adapted from Bearce's story (Contemporary Films, Inc., 267 West 25th Street, N.Y.C.)

Pantomime: *Communicating with the Face and Body*

1. "In the Park" by Marcel Marceau (Contemporary Films, 267 West 25th St., N. Y.) (Includes "David and Goliath")
2. "Pantomimes" by Marceau (Contemporary Films)
3. "The Butterfly Chaser," (Brandon Films, Inc., 200 West 57th St., N.Y.C.)

4. "The Lion Tamer," (Brandon Films)
5. "The Female Impersonator," by Charlie Chaplin (Brandon Films)
6. "The Body Snatchers," (Brandon Films)

Music

7. "Jammin' the Blues," (Brandon Films)

Dance

8. "The Strollers," a Russian folk ballet film (Brandon Films)
9. "The Red Shoes," a classic ballet—fantasy film (Brandon)

Meaningful Fantasy

10. "The Red Balloon," (Brandon Films) (*The Red Balloon*, photographs and narration from the film, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, N. Y., 1956)
11. "The Umbrella," (Brandon Films)

Themes for Adolescents

12. "White Mane," (Contemporary Films, Inc., 267 West 25th St., N.Y.C.)
13. "Nanook of the North," a struggle for survival (Contemporary Films, 55 min.) (A documentary)
14. "The Louisiana Story," a documentary (Contemporary Films)
15. "Scott's Last Journey," a documentary (Contemporary Films)

The Awakening of Conscience

16. "On the Waterfront," a full-length (2 hrs.) feature film (Brandon Films)

Disturbed Boys

17. "Boy with a Knife" (Contemporary Films, Inc., 267 West 25th St., N.Y.C.)
18. "The Quiet One" (Contemporary Films)
19. "The Umbrella" (Contemporary Films)
20. "111 Street," (Brandon Films)

A Boy's Apprenticeship to Nature

21. "The Great Adventure" (Sterling Educational Films, 241 East 34th St., N. Y. 16, N. Y.)

Cruelty on an Incomprehensibly Massive Scale

22. "The Night and the Fog," (Contemporary Films, Inc.)

RECORDS

Perception

1. "Sound Effects Sampler," an Elektra Recording (See Schwann Record Catalog)
2. "The Roar of the Greasepaint," R.C.A. recording (See Schwann Catalog)

Imagination

3. Drop Dead, an exercise in horror written and directed by Arch Aboler (Capital Records T 1763)

Horror

4. "Alfred Hitchcock Presents Ghost Stories for Young People," a Golden Record (Write to Golden Records, 630 5th Ave., N.Y.C. or see Schwann Records Catalog)

Introduction to Music

5. "Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts," a commentary with illustrative records (Good for general background) (See Schwann Catalog)
6. Moussorgsky—"Ravel's Pictures at an Exhibition," directed by Bernstein (See Schwann Records Catalog)
7. "The Instruments of the Orchestra," Falkway (Write Scholastic Book Services, 33 West 42nd St., N.Y.C. or see Schwann Catalog)
8. "Music that Paints a Picture," R.C.A.—2713
9. "What is Jazz?," a Columbia Album by Bernstein (See Schwann Catalog)

An Introduction to Dance

10. "The Nutcracker Suite," "Romeo and Juliet Suite," and "Swan Lake" by Tschaikowsky (See Schwann Catalog)
11. "Rodeo," "Billy the Kid Suite" and "Appalachian Spring" by Copland (See Schwann Catalog)
12. "Vodoo Suite" by Perez Prodo (See Schwann Catalog)
13. "Down to Earth," by Ramsey Lewis Trio (See Schwann Catalog)
14. Any Herb Alpert or Al Hirt record (See Schwann Catalog)

Tragic Prejudices

15. "West Side Story," by Bernstein (See Schwann Catalog)
16. Sergie Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet Ballet Suite" and Tschaikowsky's fantasy overture of the same title

Fantasy Artfully Done

17. "The Red Balloon" record, including music and English narration (Nonsuch recording H2001, H7001, see Schwann Catalog)

Overcoming Reluctance to Write

18. "Just So Stories and Other Tales," read by Boris Karloff (Caedmon record #TC 1038—See Schwann Catalog)
19. "Rootabaga Stories," read by Carl Sandburg (Caedmon record #TC 1089—See Schwann Catalog)